DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 271 SP 034 049

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TITLE Why Did We Choose Teaching Careers and What Will Enable Us To Stay? Recruitment and Retention Insights from One Cohort of the African-American Teaching Pool.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 72p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Beginning Teachers; *Black Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Minority Group Teachers; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Education Programs; *Teacher Persistence; *Teacher Recruitment; *Teaching (Occupation); *Teaching Experience
IDENTIFIERS African Americans

ABSTRACT

This paper examines factors which may impact on recruitment and retention of members of the African-American teaching pool. Data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews administered to prospective and beginning teachers (N=41) to determine background characteristics, reasons for entering the teaching profession, experiences in teacher education programs, actual experiences in student teaching and teaching, and how long they intended to stay in the profession. Results suggest that: (1) recruitment strategies should include reasons for pursuing a teaching career, such as the desire to be a role model, the poor conditions affecting minority communities, and an overall commitment to making a difference in the lives of young people; and (2) efforts should be targeted at the grade school, high school, undergraduate and graduate levels, and also at situations where African-Americans may be working in unsatisfactory careers. Retention requires the profession to listen to the ideas and voices of those African-Americans currently teaching with respect to necessary reforms and strategies to recruit other African-Americans into teaching and retain them once they are there. (LL)

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# Why did we choose teaching careers and what will enable us to stay?: Recruitment and retention insights from one cohort of the African-American teaching pool

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Paper presented at AERA Session 15.03

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**Why Did We Choose Teaching Careers and What Will Enable Us To Stay?: Recruitment and retention insights from one cohort of the African-American teaching pool**

*This paper examines the background characteristics, the reasons for entry to teaching and the factors which may impact on retention of 41 members of the African-American teaching pool. These findings can contribute to the research on the recruitment and retention of African-American teachers as well as inform policy initiatives relating to the improvement of the structure of the teaching profession so that academically able individuals of all backgrounds can consider teaching a viable career option.*

## Statement of the Problem

There is a scarcity of African-American teachers (Hatton, 1988) and a scarcity of well-qualified teachers (Murnane, Willet & Singer, 1988). As the United States school population becomes increasingly culturally and racially diverse, teachers who represent this diversity are essential (Haberman, 1987; Holmes, 1988; Smith, 1989; Tewell and Trubowitz, 1987). Few African-Americans are entering the teaching profession (Graham, 1988; Irvine, 1988) and some data suggest that many who do enter leave soon (Harris and Associates, 1988). Despite the fact that African-American teachers are desperately needed, they are not entering the profession in numbers even minimally approximating the need to ensure a well-balanced education for all youth. Research points to a high attrition rate among all beginning teachers (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Some research has been done to assess why beginning teachers enter (Lortie, 1975; Ryan, 1980) and leave the profession (Harris & Associates,

1985; Murnane, Singer & Willet, 1989), it has not focused on "minority" [1] teachers.

As the teaching profession explores methods to recruit and to retain academically-able individuals to the teaching profession, it is important to examine the experiences of those who are most needed in the teaching profession. The recruitment and the retention of well-qualified and academically-able African-American teachers is one of the critical educational issues of the 1990s.

This paper will explore the experiences of one cohort of the academically-able African-American teaching pool focusing on the reasons why they chose to enter teaching--despite the presence of other career options--and their ideas on the factors which may have an impact on the retention of other "minorities" in teaching. This type of inquiry, coupled with others related to educational reform, can improve the profession's ability to re-interest African-Americans and other people of color in teaching and to retain those who are already teaching.

## Methodology

The data for this paper was derived from a larger

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[1]The term "minority" will be used throughout this paper to refer to African-Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans collectively. The term "minority" will appear in quotation marks since: (1) "minorities" are frequently not a minority, and (2) the term "minority" is used pejoratively and many of the participants in this study and others object to it.

study which explored the early career experiences of the African-American teaching pool (King, S.H., 1991). The purpose of the larger study was to gather data on the background of prospective and beginning African-American teachers, why they decided to enter the teaching profession, their experiences in teacher education programs, their actual experiences in student teaching and teaching, how long they intended to stay in the profession and their feelings about selected reforms in the teaching profession.

Survey research methods were utilized. Two questionnaires, one for prospective teachers and one for beginning teachers were designed. Follow up interviews with selected participants in the study were also designed. The data analysis of the questionnaires and the interviews provided the opportunity to begin the exploration of issues which affect prospective and beginning African-American teachers.

**Who "We" Are/Background Characteristics of the Participants**

The 41 participants included 14 prospective teachers, 26 teachers who were in the beginning stages of their careers, and one former beginning teacher who was attending law school. The 41 participants in this study were 83% female and 17% male ranging in age from 22 to 50 and they identified themselves as African-American, Caribbean American and African. It was apparent that the

predominance of females in this study was in line with the fact that teaching is largely a female occupation. Similarly, the small number of males in this study corresponded to the low numbers of "minority" males in teaching nationally.

All attended Teachers College, Columbia University during the 1989-90 academic year or were recent graduates of Teachers College, Columbia University. Ten percent had already started doctoral work, and an impressive 81% percent indicated that they aspired to obtain the doctorate degree in education. The exploration of why these participants entered the teaching profession was particularly important to consider because as an academically-able cohort, they had other career opportunities to chose from and their talent and perspectives were desperately needed in the teaching profession.

**Family Background**

Fifty-four percent of the participants reported that they grew up in poor or lower income families, 31% in middle class families, and 15% in upper middle class families when growing up. Given that a significant portion of the national teaching population has consisted of individuals from lower-middle class backgrounds (Lanier & Little, 1986), the participants in this study did not seem to be unusual in this regard.

Widely varying educational attainment levels by the parents of the participants were also evident. The modal educational attainment level for their mothers was some college, and the modal educational attainment level for their fathers was high school graduate. (see Table 1). The majority of the mothers (69%) had some college education or more, whereas only 35% of the fathers had a similar level of educational attainment. Thus, overall, the mothers of the participants had acquired more education than the fathers of the participants. Additionally, for students enrolled in preservice teacher education programs at Teachers College, there was a higher educational attainment level for their mothers, which may suggest that the preservice programs at Teachers College attract students whose parents had attained a higher level of education.

Within the context of educational attainment patterns for African-Americans, the higher educational attainment level for the mothers was unusual because African-American male and female educational attainment levels were similar in 1988 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990). Additionally, within the context of a survey of recent teacher education students (AACTE, 1990), the educational attainment pattern of the mothers of the participants in this study was slightly higher. The AACTE study reported that 24% of the mothers of the

African-American teacher education students they surveyed had less than a high school diploma compared to only 17% of the participants in this study.

Clearly, the participants' mothers had a much higher level of education than teachers nationally. Lanier and Little (1986) noted that 20% of all teachers' mothers had an elementary education or less and that over 70% of all teachers' mothers had not ever attended college, as compared to only 32% of this group. The fathers of the participants in this study, however, had a lower educational attainment level than the fathers of teachers nationally based on Lanier's assessment that 40% of all teachers' fathers probably had a college education based on the fact that they held professional, semi-professional, managerial or self-employed positions. Nevertheless, similar to this study, the majority of teachers' fathers nationally did not have a college education (Lanier & Little, 1986).

Sixty-eight percent of the participants were first generation college graduates, and 32% were at least second generation college graduates. National survey data indicated that approximately 81% of all teachers in 1986 were first-generation college graduates (NEA, 1987). This suggests that more of the teachers in this study (perhaps true of all African-American teachers) were likely to be at least second rather than first-generation

college graduates than the national sample.

Twenty-two percent of the participants' mothers and five percent of the participants' fathers had been teachers while the participants were growing up. Fifty-four percent of the participants indicated that some member of their family had been a teacher in the past; just under one-third of the participants (29%) indicated that some member of their family, at the time of this study, was a teacher. Even though so few of the participants' parents had been teachers, the fact that many of the participants had been exposed to teachers in their immediate or extended families may have influenced their career choice.

The occupations of the participants' parents while the participants were growing up varied from unskilled to professional positions (see Table 2). The fathers of the participants in this study were much more heavily in unskilled positions (34%) than suggested by national survey data (NEA, 1987) which found that 9% of the fathers[2] of teachers were in unskilled positions. Similar to the majority (60%) of teachers' fathers nationally (Lanier & Little, 1986), the majority of the participants' fathers held non-professional,

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[2]Data for the occupation categories of the mothers of teachers were not gathered by the National Education Association.

non-managerial positions. This makes sense given that the majority of the participants' fathers also did not possess a college degree. Although comparative national survey data for teachers' mothers was not available, the fact that only 20% of the participants' mothers were in unskilled positions and 51% were in professional, semi-professional or managerial positions seemed unusual given the traditional non-upper class origins of most teachers. Notably, the mothers of the beginning teacher participants were more heavily in unskilled positions (26%) compared to the mothers of the prospective teacher participants (7%).

**Neighborhood Affiliation**

Collectively, including those who grew up in a combination of neighborhoods and exclusively in one neighborhood, 42% grew up in urban areas, 29% grew up in inner city areas, 29% grew up in suburban areas, 20% grew up in small town areas, and 12% grew up in rural areas. Over one-third of the participants had inner city (17%) and urban experience (17%) exclusively, with over another one-third (37%) having some experience living in urban or inner city areas. The fact that 71% of the teachers had lived in urban/inner city areas may have influenced some of the participants' decisions to enter an urban institution of education and their preferences for the types of school they worked in or planned to work in.

**Employment Experience**

Just under half of the participants (46%) were in their third or more year of full-time employment (not necessarily teaching) status. Additionally, approximately one-third of the participants (33%) possessed full time work experience of one year or less and one-fifth (21%) had between one and two years of full time employment experience. Not surprisingly, the prospective teachers had less overall employment experience than the beginning teachers.

Thirty-three of the participants (80%) had part-time and full-time employment experience(s) in positions related to education and/or working with people, such as teacher, caseworker, counselor, assistant teacher, substitute teacher, math consultant, business school teacher, and adjunct lecturer. Twenty-two of the participants (54%) had held part-time and full-time positions in fields other than education, such as researcher, teller, computer operator, transit worker, secretary, and city employee. Whereas none of the prospective teachers had formal experience as teachers, some of the prospective teachers did have experience as tutors. Although some of the participants did have employment experience in areas seemingly unrelated to education, it is not possible to classify these participants as career switchers because they may have

simply been in the process of exploring potential careers.

## Why "We" Entered the Teaching Profession

### Initial Attractions to Teaching

The opportunity to work with young people (83%), the feeling that their abilities were well suited to teaching (78%), the belief that teaching contributed to the betterment of society (73%), the feeling that teaching provided one with the opportunity to be creative (66%), their perception that teaching provided the opportunity to work with students of diverse backgrounds with diverse needs (56%), the intellectual challenge that teaching provided (56%), and good vacation time (54%) were the major initial attractions for the majority of the participants (see Table 3). These data were similar to national survey data of teachers (NEA, 1987) which found that working with young people was a major attraction for 77% of teachers under 30 years of age.

The factors rated the lowest by the participants were professional prestige (12%), a high demand for teachers (20%), good salary (20%), and community members who encouraged them to teach (22%). Thus, many of the participants entered the profession cognizant of the low salary and the overall lack of respect that members of society had for teachers and entered in spite of these factors.

Several variations were apparent between the prospective teachers' responses and the beginning teachers' responses which may be attributed to the prospective teachers' younger age and a corresponding idealism or to other background or motivational factors that differed between the two groups. Factors which were more pronounced for the prospective teachers included the opportunity to work with students of diverse backgrounds (86% compared with 41%), the intellectual challenge of teaching (79% compared with 44%), the fact that others that they respected encouraged them to teach (50% compared with 30%), the opportunity to have control over one's own work (50% compared with 30%), the perception that teaching contributed to the betterment of society (86% compared with 67%), and the opportunity to work with young people (93% compared with 78%) (see Table 3).

In contrast to the idealism reflected in the prospective teachers' responses, it appeared that the beginning teachers seemed to be more attracted to teaching by practical, work-related factors than the prospective teachers such as good salary (30% compared with 0%), good vacation time (59% compared with 43%), good working hours (52% compared with 43%), and job security (37% compared with 29%).

Notably, some of the participants (27%) checked "other" for initial attractions to teaching (see Table

3). Their "other" responses emphasized their commitment to African-American youth, their interest in a creative work environment, and their interest in service. Interestingly, the prospective teachers were more apt to have been influenced by "other" factors although no differences in terms of the types of responses they offered compared to the beginning participants were found.

**Attractions by related factors**

Cross-tabulations were conducted to ascertain if a relationship existed between the attractions to teaching of the participants and their gender, age, SES, parental education level, and their actual or projected school level and affiliation. (Only gender and mothers educational level are explored in this paper). These cross-tabulations were conducted with the idea that further exploration of the factors that most attracted these participants to teaching would help to better inform the discussion related to factors that influence the recruitment of African-American teachers.

**Attractions by gender.**

The male participants were more attracted by salary considerations (males 43%, females 15%), by the professional prestige they expected in teaching (males 29%, females 9%), by their perception that teaching contributed to the betterment of society (males 86%,

females 71%), by the amount of control they expected to have over their own work (males 57%, females 32%), by the high demand for teachers (males 29%, females 18%), and by their interest in the subject matter field (males 57%, females 47%) (see Table 4). These findings suggest that some of the working conditions of teaching may manifest themselves differently for males than females. Given the paucity of males overall, one would have to conclude that the conditions of teaching in general were not attractive to males, but for these few who were attracted, the nature of the differences did differ somewhat. Some of these differences may be attributed to the fact that males move more quickly into positions other than teaching, such as coaching and administrative posts, which hold more prestige or which enable them to have more control over their own work.

The female participants were somewhat more attracted to teaching than the males for practical reasons which may be related to a dual career necessity--the parental and professional demands on many women. More women perceived that teaching was a good job to combine with being a parent (females 35%, males 0%), had good vacation time (females 56%, males 43%), and because they felt the job was not limited to a specific locality (females 27%, males 14%). Also, the female members were more apt to state that community members encouraged them to teach

(females 24%, males 14%). This variation may suggest that since teaching has traditionally been a female occupation, community members (aka society) may be more inclined to recommend teaching for women.

**Attractions by parental educational level**

Several variations in the participants' attractions to teaching were apparent based on the mother's highest level of educational attainment (see Table 5). The participants whose mothers had an higher level of educational attainment level

were more likely to be attracted to teaching because of the opportunity to work with students of diverse backgrounds (elementary school/some high, 43%; high school graduate/some college, 38%; college graduate/graduate school, 92%), because they felt that their abilities were well suited to teaching (elementary school/some high school, 43%; high school graduate/some college, 91%; college graduate/graduate school, 77%), and because of the opportunity to be creative (elementary school/some high school, 43%; high school graduate/some college, 62%; college graduate/graduate school, 85%).

This may indicate that individuals who came from families with mothers who possessed high educational attainment could afford the luxury of being attracted to a career because of a factor like creativity or value it because it was valued in their family life or have

experienced school settings and/or teachers where creativity is an attribute of the job. The fact that they were interested in working with student from diverse backgrounds may suggest that this was valued by their mothers. Additionally, these participants may have had their abilities affirmed by their mothers. These findings suggested that the mother's level of educational attainment did influence the participants' attractions to teaching and that the influence of the mother in career choices should be explored further.

**Factors which Encouraged/Discouraged the Participants' Entrance into the Teaching Profession**

The participants in this survey were additionally influenced in their career choice by individuals, by conditions affecting society, and by a myriad of other factors. The individuals who had the strongest influence on the participants' entrance into the teaching profession included, in order of frequency of mention, the participants' mothers, other relatives, college teachers, siblings, college peers, and colleagues (see Table 6). This strong influence was based on the fact that two-thirds or more of the participants cited one of these individuals as being influential ("very encouraging" to "very discouraging").

The individuals who were cited as "very encouraging" to the participants' career choice of teaching included their children (78%) for those that had children, their

mothers (53%), their spouses (50%) for those that had spouses, their colleagues (48%), and their students (46%). The fact that 48% of the participants cited colleagues and 46% cited students as "very encouraging" may mean that they were looking forward to working with students and other teachers or that they were referring to colleagues at their previous jobs.

Given that the participants cited their mothers (53%) as "very encouraging" compared to only 28% of the fathers suggested that the participants' mothers may have been more salient to them than their fathers, which is not uncommon in the African-American family structure where 43% of African-American families were headed by females in 1988 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990).

Other individuals who some of the participants' cited as "very encouraging" to their career choice of teaching included their elementary teachers (42%) and their college teachers (37%). This implies that teachers can be critical to the promotion of the teaching profession and/or that some of the experiences that these participants have had with students may have been positive.

The individuals who were the most discouraging to the participants' career choice of teaching (cited as "somewhat discouraging" or "very discouraging") were their colleagues (19%) and their college peers (17%).

The fact that their colleagues were cited both as "very encouraging" and "very discouraging" suggests the tremendous amount of importance that these individuals hold. It is also possible that the participants' colleagues, like their college peers, may have been close in age to the participants and may, therefore, have exerted understandable peer influence.

The most influential factors cited by the participants were the lack of role models for youth (69%), the need for "minority" teachers (62%), the poor conditions of "minority" communities (56%), and their interest in a service occupation (55%). These four factors were even more influential than the participants' own mothers. Additionally, these factors related to the need for role models and their interest in helping people were also reinforced in their open-ended comments under the "other" category (see Table 3).

The factor which was listed as somewhat discouraging and/or very discouraging was the media (11%). This suggests that some media images may be discouraging but not influential enough to dissuade these candidates from entering the teaching profession. But it should be noted that 45% of the participants cited the media as very encoouraging and somewhat encouraging them to enter teaching.

**The Periods in which the Participants' Decisions to Become a Teacher Occurred**

One's decision to enter a profession can occur at different time periods in one's life. It is helpful to learn when individuals decide to become a teacher to help to determine where recruitment efforts might profitably focus. Most participants indicated more than one influential period in which their decision to become a teacher occurred. (see Table 7).

The most common time period indicated by the participants was during undergraduate school (51%), which was not surprising since this was predominantly a graduate education student sample. Forty-two percent indicated that a period when they decided to become a teacher was after graduation from college.

Interestingly, one-fourth indicated at least one of the periods when they decided to become a teacher was during elementary school (24%), which may have been indicative of the presence of some very powerful role models during this period. Data regarding encouraging and discouraging factors which influenced the participants' entrance into teaching (see Table 6) suggested that some of these role models may have included their mothers, their elementary teachers and their college teachers. The fact that many of the participants indicated that their career decisions relating to teaching were made as late as college or even after college implies that individuals are taking longer

to decide on a career.

The graduate school option to obtain a degree in education was an important option available because many of the participants solidified their decision while in college and after graduation from college. Importantly, without this graduate option, some may not have been able to pursue teaching careers.

More of the beginning teachers (30%) than the prospective teachers (14%) cited elementary school as a time period when their decision to become a teacher occurred, and more of the prospective teachers (64%) than the beginning teachers (44%) cited undergraduate school. This variation may have been due to the fact that since the prospective teachers were, on average, younger than the beginning teachers, and female, more of them may have had a wider range of career opportunities to consider, given the increased career opportunities available for women in recent years (Darling-Hammond et al., 1987).

## What Will Enable Those Like Us to Stay in the Teaching Profession

### Participants' Ideas about Recruitment and Retention of Minorities to the Teaching Profession

In addition to exploring the reasons why these individuals chose teaching careers, their perspectives on issues which will impact the recruitment and the retention of other African-American and "minority"

individuals were investigated. The career plans of this cohort were discouraging--with only 18% planning a career in teaching.

However, given that 60% were committed to careers in education (as teachers, administrators or higher education professionals), their perspectives about factors that influenced their career plans and about their ideas about what might influence the career plans of other potential "minority" teacher professionals were deemed essential.

**Perspectives on why "Minorities" Are Not Choosing to Teach**

The perspectives which related to why the participants felt "minorities" were not entering the profession illustrated the participants' knowledge and critical understanding of many of the problems besieging the teaching profession.

**Low salary and lack of prestige**

Many commented on the low salary of teaching and the lack of prestige associated with teaching. Since several of the responses contained both of these categories, these responses are presented together. Nineteen respondents (51%) offered 21 responses which related to their perception that the low salary associated with teaching was a major reason why "minorities" were not entering the teaching profession. One respondent plainly stated:

> I think minorities are not choosing teaching because many choose to work where they can support themselves. Teaching is rewarding, but garbage men/women start at $31,000.

Another participant eloquently maintained:

> The fundamental issue is economic in nature. Well-trained minorities can command more money in better paying industries. Couple this with many of the problems plaguing the profession of teaching today, and it is easy to see why minorities avoid careers in teaching.

Succinct, yet reflective of the remainder of the responses, one participant stated:, "Nowadays, minorities are striving to a financial level that is not offered with teaching."

Twelve respondents contended that the low prestige associated with teaching was a major reason why many members of "minority" populations were not interested in teaching.

> In this society, teaching is not a respected field. The government does not value teachers, which makes the students not value them too. Therefore, minorities who are on the lower economic scale tend to seek or choose careers that are more respected, glamorous and richer(in salary).

Another explained:

> I think minorities do not remain [in teaching] because of the b.s. they have to take from their co-workers. We don't need it. And as much as we love the students, we can get respect and a decent salary elsewhere.

Similarly, another respondent reported:

> Many minorities do not view teaching as a profession. It does not offer the recognition and prestige other professions offer. . . . It is a no thanks job and many do not want to subject themselves to the abuse of the teaching profession,

especially in the urban areas.

Interestingly, data from The American Teacher 1989 study indicated that just over 50% percent of the teachers represented in the Metropolitan Life's study felt respected as a teacher in today's society (Harris & Associates, 1989). While these data reflected an increased number of teachers who felt respected compared with their previous studies, the report still presented an indictment of how poorly respected approximately 50% of today's teachers felt.

Although the respondents felt that the lack of prestige was a reason that "minorities" were not entering the profession, it is useful to recall that the most did not cite professional prestige as a reason why they entered the teaching profession (see Table 3). Apparently, other reasons for entering the teaching profession were much more important to them and allowed them to overlook, at least initially, the low prestige associated with teaching. It could be that these participants saw themselves as being very different from their peers since so many cited lack of prestige as a reason why "minorities" were not entering teaching, yet they entered the profession not swayed by low prestige.

**Working conditions of teaching**

Eighteen respondents (49%) offered 28 responses detailing their perspective that undesirable working

conditions were a major factor which keeps "minorities" from pursuing careers in education. One respondent stated:

> I think minorities are choosing not to teach for a number of reasons, primarily the negative reputation that's associated with teaching especially in the New York City public school system, specifically the nature of and behavior problems of the student population.

Another respondent expressed:

> minorities are choosing not to teach because of overcrowded classrooms, [and] fear of student violence and because they think they won't have an impact; their hands will be tied [by] red tape [from the] board of education.

Another respondent listed several negative working conditions as a reason why "minorities" are not choosing to teach:

> disciplinary problems, fear, inadequate working conditions and materials, inadequate prep[aration] time, and non-participation in decision-making power.

Another respondent alleged:

> [Teaching is] too high[ly] stressed and [suffers from a] high burnout rate due to the behavior of children and young adults in our society.

Still another stated:

> Unless a minority teacher is inclined to work in a private school or a white environment, it appears, from my experience, that they are doomed to be embroiled in a massive bureaucracy where quiet obedience, teaching for mediocrity, adversarial politics and maintaining the status quo are the rule. A teacher is mostly at the mercy of his/her principal. Even if one is lucky enough to have a decent, innovative superior, they are obliged to meekly follow their boss's idea of creativity with no input or voice.

These findings suggest that the respondents

concluded that many "minorities" found the working conditions in urban schools to be poor and they believed that urban school settings would be the school settings that "minorities" might be the most exposed to or the most likely to consider when contemplating a career in teaching. The respondents sensed that many of their peers would be deterred by the student-related problems, or the constraints that the structure of the profession and/or the bureaucracy of schools placed on teachers.

Other career opportunities

Ten respondents (27%) offered 14 responses related to their perception that the existence of alternate career opportunities was a reason why "minorities" were not entering the education profession. These responses explained that since teaching was once the primary professional field open to African-Americans and other "minorities," the opening up of other professional careers had caused "minorities" to pursue these other options in lieu of teaching.

A respondent explained: "We have been oppressed for so long, that we look to professions which will give us status in society." Another respondent noted:

> More minorities are simply entering professions which many were once excluded from such as: medicine, law and business--professions which also pay much more and provide job security. Major recruitment has recently moved towards career fields of business, medicine and other related sciences, computer science and math. Ivy League schools are going out and recruiting our highest achieving

> minorities for the more popular fields, states one participant.

Another respondent offered more of an historical perspective:

> Minorities are not choosing to teach because historically teaching has always been a profession in which minorities were allowed to work. As new doors began to open in other areas minorities felt the need to move ahead and pioneer to do "bigger and better" things. . . . Also, other professions, as they see the need, make strong efforts to recruit minorities into their particular profession. I do not feel that overall there is a genuine commitment to recruiting minorities in the education field. There is much rhetoric, but seemingly little action.

The following comment, combined with the previous responses, underscored the historical struggle which contributed to the development of alternative career opportunities as well as to the void left by African-Americans' entering professions other than teaching. Offering the perspective of her family, a participant explained:

> There are three career teachers in my family. Two of them chose teaching as a profession because many other occupations were closed to minorities. The third entered the teaching field in 1969 because she could not go any further in her chosen profession. Perhaps more minorities would enter teaching if they realized that the academic skills of minority students are steadily declining and they have the power to reverse this trend.

<u>Lack of role models</u>

Six respondents (16%) felt that the shortage of role models for "minorities" was a reason why "minorities" were not entering the teaching profession in greater numbers. Responses included: "lack of

minorities in the profession" and "not many minorities are seen in the role." Given the fact that many of the participants cited a lack of positive role models as an attraction for their entrance into teaching, it was likely that many more than responded concurred.

Participants' Perspective on Changes that Would Help Encourage "Minorities" to Enter the Teaching Profession

The following comments focused on the changes that the respondents suggested were necessary to encourage African-Americans and other "minorities" to enter the teaching profession. Not surprisingly, many of their ideas for changes within the teaching profession directly related to those reasons they listed for "minorities" not entering the profession. Their responses emphasized the need for financial incentives, recruitment programs to encourage "minorities" to enter teaching, support programs for "minorities," prestige accorded to the teaching profession and improved working conditions.

Financial Incentives.

Fourteen respondents (38%) offered 16 responses in which they indicated that financial incentives were necessary to encourage "minorities" to enter the teaching profession. "PAY TEACHERS MORE MONEY," one teacher exclaimed. Given the fact that over 50% of the respondents contended that "minorities" were not entering teaching due to salary, it is understandable that they recommended higher salaries as a recruitment strategy.

**Recruitment programs**

Eleven respondents (30%) extended 12 responses in which they indicated that in order to encourage "minorities" to enter the teaching profession, recruitment programs were necessary. One respondent suggested: "Actual teachers need to go into our colleges and encourage students to seek teaching [careers]." Another respondent recommended:

> They [minorities] need to know that it's our Black children who are robbed of an education. The dropout rate among Blacks is astronomical. They need to know that enlightening a mind outweighs the knowledge of merely receiving beneficial and financial gain. To know that you had the opportunity to work with a young mind is rewarding in every aspect.

This response suggests that perhaps if more "minorities" understood the dire conditions affecting many "minority" communities and how rewarding teaching can be, they may be more inclined to teach.

One respondent suggested: "Sponsor neighborhood recruitment programs to bring in prospective teachers and utilize the media." Since so few participants were influenced positively by the media in their decision to become a teacher (see Table 6), this response may be particularly useful for those involved in the recruitment of teachers to consider.

Another participant suggested: "Begin recruitment/career awareness in teaching at [the] high school level." Given the variety of time periods which

influenced the participants' entrance into teaching, recruiting at the high school level, as well as college and thereafter, seems appropriate.

Related to the success of recruitment programs is the presence of role models. One participant felt that role models were needed who could then encourage "minorities" to enter the teaching profession. In light of the findings regarding the participant's reasons for entering the teaching profession, these responses make sense given that few of the participants (22%) cited community members as encouraging them to pursue teaching and that only 37% cited others that they respected as encouraging them to teach (see Table 3).

Support programs for "minorities"

Nine respondents (24%) believed that support programs for "minorities" were necessary to encourage "minorities" to enter the teaching profession. One respondent recommended: "Training programs specifically designed to meet the needs of minority teachers." Another respondent offered a response which comprehensively summarized others' opinions:

> In order to encourage minorities to enter and to remain in the education field, they need to be recruited, trained, compensated properly, and given autonomy and confidence. Simply and respectively, any person would like to be wanted (the first three listed) and trusted with their abilities (the last listed).

Prestige accorded to the teaching profession

Eight respondents (22%) indicated that teaching had to be respected in order for "minorities" to consider teaching as a viable career option. Again, these responses corresponded to several of the participants' responses citing the lack of prestige associated with the profession as a factor that inhibited "minorities" entrance to the teaching profession. A respondent proposed:

> We must make teaching a profession most minorities can feel a future in; where they will have the needed support and the deserved respect from other colleagues and members of their community. Today not many people respect teachers, they believe anybody can be a teacher.

Similarly:

> In order to increase minorities' interest in teaching, teaching must gain a high stature and respect. Teachers need the same respect as doctors and lawyers.

Yet another perspective:

> Not until society changes its attitude about teachers, will people (in general) choose this profession. Only those who feel very committed to their people will come into this profession.

Yet another reflected: "Society must begin to value young people and the future of the world for people of color to see the importance of teaching." These responses point to the respondents' perspectives that not only does the teaching profession need to be respected but that young people and education need to be valued by society.

<u>Improved working conditions</u>

Six respondents (16%) sensed that the working conditions of teaching had to be improved before "minorities" will consider the teaching profession. One respondent shouted: "The best way to hold on to teachers is to get rid of all the paperwork (reports, evaluation, etc.) and let them teach!" Another participant commented: "The improvement of the educational system as a whole should attract any candidate."

**Pertinent Issues in the Teaching Profession**

Frequently, reforms are developed and implemented without actual teacher input. Since it was hoped that this group will remain in or at least remain interested in issues affecting the teaching profession, the ideas of this group of the African-American teaching pool about teaching reforms are critically important.

**Barriers for "minorities"**

Sixty-three percent of the participants indicated that two major barriers keeping "minorities" from pursuing teaching were the fact that better career opportunities existed in other professions for "minorities" and the fact that not enough "minorities" were pursuing the educational training which indeed qualifies them to become licensed teachers.

The fact that the majority of the participants felt that "minorities" were not pursuing the appropriate educational training to become a teacher may be an

indictment of the educational system which may not adequately counsel individuals in terms of what requirements are necessary to pursue a teaching career. It could also be an indictment of the teacher certification process which often includes additional and/or different requirements depending on the city or the state in which certification is sought. Along the same lines, this may be an indicator of an inadequate recruitment process to teaching which has not made clear the "entry to teaching process" including such possibilities as a one-year masters programs and alternate route programs.

**Competency testing**

The participants' ideas about competency testing were particularly informative given the fact that competency testing is a reform aimed at improving the quality of teachers and given the implications of these tests for the recruitment and the retention of "minority" teachers. Their responses suggested that the majority of the participants favored assessment mechanisms but not tests in their current form.

Eighty percent of the respondents asserted that these teacher competency tests and other standardized tests contained racially discriminatory items. Eighty-six percent indicated that "minority" teacher candidates should not have their employment dependent on a passing

score on these tests until a substantial research effort is undertaken to eliminate the bias found in these tests. Fully 97% percent of the sample indicated that other forms of assessment should be developed as a determinant of teacher entry and quality. Nonetheless, only 38% felt that increasing the professional nature of the teaching profession was dependent upon uniform testing procedures.

Fifty-four percent of the participants agreed with the statement that "Given that we need strong "minority" role models for our youth, it is therefore necessary for entry to the profession to be exactly the same for all races," while 46% disagreed. This difference may have been indicative of different opinions of the participants regarding ways to respond to the need for role models or it may suggest that the statement was worded in a confusing manner. Importantly, the dichotomy in their responses underscored the fact that differences of opinion did exist within the African-American community and that teacher competency testing was a sensitive issue. Nevertheless, their responses differed somewhat from national survey data of teachers which indicated that 82% of teachers felt "strongly positive" or "somewhat positive" that requiring teachers to take competency tests before certification would have a positive effect on increasing the quality of teachers (Harris & Associates, 1985).

The responses by the participants in this study did not necessarily mean that these participants did not support the notion of tests but they clearly showed non-support for current tests. It is apparent that these important criticisms were leveled by individuals who were very academically able, not by those who might be the most in danger of failing such tests; thus, they were presumably able to differentiate bias from other testing issues. The participants' responses indicated acceptance of the literature related to teacher competency testing which shows that in fact these tests have been a deterrent to African-Americans entering the profession (Dilworth, 1990). Furthermore, their responses suggested that their views, particularly as academically talented African-Americans, on other types of assessment may be helpful to those in the teaching profession who are addressing this issue and re-evaluating the use of such competency tests.

**Support for Reforms Related to the Teaching Profession**

The participants were presented with a list of suggested or actual reforms in the teaching profession and asked to indicate whether they felt a reform would be a significant positive change for the teaching profession. All of the participants indicated that better working conditions would be a "very significant" or "significant" positive change, 96% of the participants

felt that more teacher participation in school wide decision making would be "very significant" or "significant," 95% felt that a substantial salary increase would be a "very significant" or "significant" positive change, and 93% felt that a several step career ladder would be a "very significant" or "significant" way to improve the teaching profession.

Analysis of the responses of the prospective teacher participants and the beginning teacher participants revealed that the prospective teachers felt more strongly about more teacher participation in decision making; 100% of the prospective teachers felt that this would be a very significant change compared with 56% of the beginning teachers who felt that this would be a very significant and necessary change. The prospective teachers may have been influenced by the fact that school-wide decision making was such a "hot" topic, at the time of this study.

These findings were similar to the American Teacher by Louis Harris & Associates (1989) which reported that teachers did indeed support leadership committees which consisted of the principal and teachers and students. Another explanation for the differences might be that the beginning teachers, experiencing the burdens and tremendous responsibilities of teaching, did not want the additional responsibility of being involved in decision

making. The overwhelming belief that improved working conditions were needed may reflect the respondents' personal experiences with inadequate working conditions either as teachers or as kindergarten through grade 12 students themselves.

**Ideas about Methods to Increase the Supply of "Minority" Teachers**

The participants were also asked for their opinion on what needs to be done to increase the supply of "minority" teachers. They perceived that providing financial incentives would "help a lot" (88%). Earlier findings such as their assessment that "minorities" were not entering the teaching profession because of low salary, helped to underscore the importance of financial assistance and remuneration for this group of the African-American teaching pool.

Approximately, two-thirds of the participants felt that expanding recruitment programs to high schools (68%), encouraging "minority" college students to consider teaching careers (65%), and encouraging "minority" students to become tutors (63%) would "help a lot." These answers were similar to findings reported in the American Teacher 1988 study which found that "minority" teachers felt that helpful recruitment strategies included: encouraging "minority" college students to enter teaching careers (65%), financial incentives (66%), involving "minority" students

by encouraging them to become tutors (62%), and expanding recruitment programs to high schools (53%) (Harris & Associates, 1988).

In contrast, only 37% of the participants in this study felt that recruiting from other professions would "help a lot" as a strategy to increase the supply of those entering the teaching profession, 29% percent feel that this strategy would "help a little," and 29% were not sure. This suggests that the participants felt that the allure of other more lucrative or more well respected professions was a serious threat to recruiting individuals to teaching. Perhaps the participants also wonder whether those not drawn to teaching initially will in fact have a commitment to teaching.

## Implications

Several of the findings in this study suggest important implications for the recruitment and retention of African-American teachers. Hopefully, the responsibility of addressing the recruitment and the retention of African-American teachers will be shared by all who express an interest in increasing the numbers of African-Americans in the teaching profession: teacher education institutions, school districts, policy organizations, African-American community organizations, and government organizations, to name a few. It is envisioned that all involved in the recruitment and the

retention of African-American teachers will seek out and consider the recommendations and the perspectives of African-Americans and others who possess experiences relevant to the "minority" teacher dilemma.

## Implications for the Recruitment of African-American Teachers

Recruitment involves attracting individuals to teaching and providing them with the resources necessary to pursue and eventually obtain a position in teaching. The majority of the respondents in this study stated that at least one of the time periods in which their decision to become a teacher occurred was during undergraduate school. This suggests that career guidance programs at colleges and universities should include increased recruiting efforts by school districts and teacher education institutions. Representatives of the teaching profession should be at least as visible on college campuses as are representatives of corporate America, the legal profession, and the medical profession. Additionally, other time periods were cited by some respondents as being influential, such as elementary and high school; thus, it can never be too early for recruitment efforts and/or career awareness programs to begin.

The participants ranged in age from 22 to 50 and indicated that periods in which they made the decision to pursue teaching ranged from elementary school to graduate

school. Thus, recruitment efforts should not be limited to colleges and universities that only enroll the traditional-aged college student. Rather, those interested in recruiting African-American individuals into teaching need also focus their efforts towards non-traditional college age students, career-switchers, and those who might be interested in entering the world of work at a later age. Efforts must be made to seek out the avenues in which to contact such individuals.

Without compromising the desire for extremely academically-able teachers to enter the teaching profession, the profession needs to acknowledge that other avenues exist where potentially academically able, committed and dedicated African-Americans may be found. In addition to heavy recruitment at high schools, colleges and historically Black colleges, other entities such as agencies which provide alternative educational services for youth and community education programs for adults should be included in recruitment efforts.

Several of the respondents indicated that their children, their spouses, their mothers, their colleagues and their students were particularly encouraging to them in their career choice of teaching. Elementary teachers and college teachers were also listed by a significant number of the respondents as being encouraging to their career choice. However, it was unfortunate that few of

the above individuals were encouraging to much more than 50% of the respondents.

Being encouraged to teach may be a necessary element in the recruitment process of African-American individuals to the field of teaching. It is quite normal for young people to be influenced by others and to respect the opinions of others about a decision as important as one's career choice. This is particularly true in the case of one's parents, one's teachers and one's peers about careers which these significant others hold in high esteem. While the respondents cited few individuals who were particularly discouraging in their career choice, it is possible that influential individuals' silence or non-committal attitude could have had the effect of being discouraging. This suggests that efforts need to be made to sensitize those who have contact with youth, including members of the African-American community, to the problem of the shortage of African-American teachers and to help them understand the critical role that they play in encouraging or discouraging potential teaching entrants' perception of and choice of a career.

Some of the strongest initial attractions to teaching for the respondents in this study were similar to other research on teachers (Lortie, 1975; NEA, 1987): the opportunity to work with young people and the

opportunity to make a difference in society (the need for role models, improving the poor conditions of "minority" communities) have been among the strongest attractions for those entering teaching and were for the respondents in this study. Often, the poor working conditions of teaching and the laborious non-intellectual tasks associated with teaching form the knowledge base that society has about teaching. Countering some of these "unattractive" realities with some of the lesser known "attractive" realities could be helpful in recruiting some of the "best and the brightest" to the teaching profession.

The findings of this study suggest that recruitment strategies for African-Americans should emphasize possible reasons that they might be interested in pursuing a teaching career, including the desire to be a role model, the poor conditions affecting "minority" communities, and an overall commitment to making a difference in the lives of young people. Secondly, recruitment efforts should be targeted at the grade school, high school, undergraduate and graduate levels. Additionally, other institutions where African-Americans may unhappily be working in other careers should be considered a source of potential teaching candidates. Thirdly, recruitment efforts should recognize the need to be able to attract individuals to exceptional teacher

preparation programs and to support them throughout their preparation--academically, financially, and professionally. Overall, recruitment involves comprehensive efforts to provide individuals with exceptional teacher preparation as well as efforts to assist individuals in procuring teaching positions.

## Implications for the Retention of African-American Teachers

The successful recruitment of talented African-Americans to the teaching profession is only half the battle in the fight to diversify the teaching force. Retaining these individuals by providing them with the knowledge, the improved working conditions, the support, and the recognition worthy of any professional becomes critically important to the successful cultivation of an ethnically diverse, talented teaching force.

Whereas change can not occur overnight, school districts might consider becoming publicly or visibly committed to change and/or to improving the teaching profession. Then, they could express this commitment to potential teachers. This might help in recruiting and retaining the best and the brightest to teaching. Additionally, learning about the experiences of those talented African-American teachers who do feel constrained by the bureaucracy may help to inform school districts and teacher education about ways to foster change. Similar to teacher education institutions,

school districts cannot singlehandedly work for change. The climate of the country with regard to public education and teaching has to improve, and government and private and community organizations should be a part of the process to help this happen.

Particularly as the teaching profession considers ways to retain African-Americans in teaching, it may be helpful for the profession to explore the reasons why these individuals entered the profession. Efforts could then be made to ensure that these individuals are given the opportunity to pursue the characteristics which initially attracted them to the profession. For example, many in this study were attracted to teaching because of their commitment to improving the poor conditions affecting "minority" communities and their desire to be role models for African-American youth. Therefore, school districts might consider developing creative staffing schedules to allow individuals to devote a portion of their time pursuing ways to be effective role models and/or developing ways to create the best possible teaching environments to ensure that their students will be successful.

Secondly, the retention of academically-able African-American teachers and talented teachers of all ethnicities is dependent on an improved structure of the teaching profession, including the removal of the large

bureaucracies inherent in many urban public school systems. It is only logical that retention strategies would have to enable the intelligence, expertise, and commitment that academically able African-American teachers bring with them to a teaching career to be utilized and not ignored within a bureaucratic system of school organization.

Thirdly, our nation's leaders (government, religious, community) must work to make sure that the public recognizes the importance of the teaching profession and the need to respect and treat teachers as professionals in the same fashion that our society acknowledges and supports business women and men, doctors, and lawyers. This would provide the framework for which change could really occur and allow individuals who are recruited to the teaching profession to increasingly feel more positive about their work during this process of change and ultimately be retained in the profession.

Overall, related to both the recruitment and the retention of African-American teachers, it may also become prudent for the profession to listen to the ideas of those African-Americans who are currently in the teaching profession about necessary reforms and strategies to recruit and retain other African-Americans into teaching. Whereas retention involves many factors,

the major implication of this study regarding retention is that all entities involved are consulted and included in the change process.

## Summary

The data in this paper can inform research and policy initiatives related to the recruitment and retention of academically able African-American and "minority" individuals. The urgency of improving the teaching profession must be acknowledged. The relationship between an improved teaching profession comprised of academically-talented individuals of all backgrounds to the solution of problems confronting our country and our youth such as the devastation caused by drugs, AIDS, illiteracy, unemployment and crime must be emphasized.

Collectively, these findings suggest that African-American individuals are important sources of information regarding how to recruit individuals like themselves into teaching and that they felt that multiple strategies should be utilized. While some of their conclusions and recommendations have been heard before by those involved in the field of education, the responses of this group of African-American teachers offered detail, depth, and their voice.

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Table 1

Highest Educational Level Reached by the Parents of Participants

| | | | | Beginning Teachers | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mother's Educational Level | All (n=41) | Prospective (n=14) | Beginning (n=27) | Preservice at TC (n=19) | Preservice Elsewhere w/ Inservice at TC (n=3) | Inservice at TC (n=5) |
| Elementary school | 7% | -- | 11% | 11% | 33% | -- |
| Some high school | 10% | 14% | 7% | 5% | 33% | -- |
| High school graduate | 15% | 14% | 15% | 11% | -- | 40% |
| Some college | 37% | 36% | 37% | 37% | 33% | 40% |
| College graduate | 10% | -- | 15% | 16% | -- | 20% |
| Some graduate school | 7% | 7% | 7% | 11% | -- | -- |
| Graduate/professional degree | 15% | 29% | 7% | 11% | -- | -- |

Table 1 (continued)

| Father's Educational Level | All (n=38) | Prospective (n=12) | Beginning (n=26) | Beginning Teachers | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Preservice at TC (n=18) | Preservice Elsewhere w/ Inservice at TC (n=3) | Inservice at TC (n=5) |
| Elementary school | 8% | -- | 12% | 11% | -- | 20% |
| Some high school | 21% | 25% | 19% | 11% | 66% | 20% |
| High school graduate | 37% | 33% | 39% | 44% | 33% | 20% |
| Some college | 11% | 17% | 8% | 11% | -- | -- |
| College graduate | 8% | 8% | 8% | 6% | -- | 20% |
| Some graduate school | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Graduate/professional school | 16% | 17% | 14% | 17% | -- | 20% |



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Table 2

Occupations of Participants' Parents

| Mother's Occupation | All (n=41) | Prospective (n=14) | Beginning (n=27) | Beginning Teachers | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Preservice at TC (n=19) | Preservice Elsewhere w/ Inservice at TC (n=3) | Inservice at TC (n=5) |
| Farmer | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Unskilled position | 20% | 7% | 26% | 32% | -- | 20% |
| Skilled position | 22% | 36% | 15% | 11% | -- | 40% |
| Clerical/sales position | 7% | 7% | 7% | 11% | -- | -- |
| Managerial/self-employed | 2% | -- | 4% | -- | -- | 20% |
| Professional/semi-professional position | 49% | 50% | 48% | 47% | 100% | 20% |

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Table 2 (continued)

| Father's Occupation | All (n=38) | Prospective (n=12) | Beginning (n=26) | Beginning Teachers: Preservice at TC (n=18) | Beginning Teachers: Preservice Elsewhere w/ Inservice at TC (n=3) | Beginning Teachers: Inservice at TC (n=5) | NEA Fathers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Farmer | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 13% |
| Unskilled position | 34% | 33% | 35% | 33% | 66% | 20% | 9% |
| Skilled position | 26% | 25% | 27% | 33% | -- | 20% | 30% |
| Clerical/sales position | 3% | -- | 4% | -- | -- | 20% | 5% |
| Managerial/self-employed | 10% | 17% | 8% | 6% | 33% | -- | 22% |
| Professional/semi-professional position | 28% | 25% | 27% | 28% | -- | 40% | 22% |

Table 3

Factors which Initially Attracted Participants to Teaching

| Factors | All (n=41) | Prospective (n=14) | Beginning (n=27) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opportunity to work with young people | 83% | 93% | 78% |
| Abilities are well suited to teaching | 78% | 77% | 78% |
| Contributes to betterment of society | 73% | 86% | 67% |
| Opportunity to be creative | 66% | 71% | 63% |
| Opportunity to work with students of diverse backgrounds | 56% | 86% | 41% |
| Intellectual challenge | 56% | 79% | 44% |
| Good vacation time | 54% | 43% | 59% |
| Interest in subject matter field | 49% | 50% | 48% |
| Good working hours | 49% | 43% | 52% |
| Opportunity to have control over one's own work | 37% | 50% | 30% |
| Others that I respected encouraged me to teach | 37% | 50% | 30% |
| Job security | 34% | 29% | 37% |
| Good job to combine with being a parent | 29% | 36% | 26% |
| Other* | 27% | 50% | 11% |
| Job not limited to a specific locality | 24% | 36% | 19% |
| Community members encouraged me to teach | 22% | 21% | 22% |
| Good salary | 20% | 0% | 30% |

Table 3 (continued)

| Factors | All (n=41) | Prospective (n=14) | Beginning (n=27) |
|---|---|---|---|
| High demand for teachers | 20% | 21% | 19% |
| Professional prestige | 12% | 14% | 11% |

*Other category includes responses:

Related to Creativity (n=4)
"creative work"
"a good way to integrate life experience, educational experience and trivial knowledge"
"no two days ever the same"
"good job to combine with other creative work"

Related to Role Models (n=3)
"opportunity to be a positive role model for minority youth"
"need for more 'conscientious' African-American teachers"
"Children keep you honest. I had a couple of great teachers that really influenced me, and I would like to pass on anything I can offer to the generation to come."

Related to Service (n=3)
"low literacy rate among Black youth"
"opportunity to share my vision with others"
"the strong desire to uplift my people and other people of color"

Related to Rewards (n=1)
"Immediate gratification"

Table 4

**Initial Attractions by Gender**

| | All (n=41) | Male (n=7) | Female (n=34) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opportunity to work with young people | 83% | 86% | 82% |
| Abilities are well suited to teaching | 78% | 86% | 77% |
| Contributes to betterment of society | 73% | 86% | 71% |
| Opportunity to be creative | 66% | 71% | 65% |
| Opportunity to work with students of diverse backgrounds | 56% | 57% | 56% |
| Intellectual challenge | 56% | 57% | 56% |
| Good vacation time | 54% | 43% | 56% |
| Interest in subject matter field | 49% | 57% | 47% |
| Good working hours | 49% | 43% | 50% |
| Opportunity to have control over one's own work | 37% | 57% | 32% |
| Others that I respected encouraged me to teach | 37% | 29% | 38% |
| Job security | 34% | 29% | 35% |
| Good job to combine with being a parent | 29% | -- | 35% |
| Other | 27% | 14% | 29% |
| Job not limited to a specific locality | 24% | 14% | 27% |
| Community members encouraged me to teach | 22% | 14% | 24% |
| Good salary | 20% | 43% | 15% |
| High demand for teachers | 20% | 29% | 18% |
| Professional prestige | 12% | 29% | 9% |

Table 5

Initial Attractions by Mother's Highest Educational Attainment Level

| | All (n=41) | Mother's Highest Educational Attainment Level | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Elementary/Some High School (n=7) | High School Graduate/ Some College (n=21) | College Graduate/ Graduate School (n=13) |
| Opportunity to work with young people | 83% | 86% | 86% | 77% |
| Abilities are well suited to teaching | 78% | 43% | 91% | 77% |
| Contributes to betterment of society | 73% | 71% | 76% | 69% |
| Opportunity to be creative | 66% | 43% | 62% | 85% |
| Opportunity to work with students of diverse backgrounds | 56% | 43% | 38% | 92% |
| Intellectual challenge | 56% | 71% | 43% | 69% |
| Good vacation time | 54% | 43% | 52% | 62% |
| Interest in subject matter field | 49% | 57% | 57% | 31% |
| Good working hours | 49% | 43% | 52% | 46% |
| Opportunity to have control over one's own work | 37% | 43% | 43% | 23% |



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Table 5 (continued)

| | All (n=41) | Mother's Highest Educational Attainment Level | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Elementary/Some High School (n=7) | High School Graduate/ Some College (n=21) | College Graduate/ Graduate School (n=13) |
| Others that I respected encouraged me to teach | 37% | 14% | 43% | 38% |
| Job security | 34% | 29% | 33% | 39% |
| Good job to combine with being a parent | 29% | 29% | 33% | 23% |
| Other | 27% | -- | 29% | 39% |
| Job not limited to a specific locality | 24% | -- | 24% | 39% |
| Community members encouraged me to teach | 22% | 29% | 24% | 15% |
| Good salary | 20% | 14% | 29% | 8% |
| High demand for teachers | 20% | 29% | 10% | 31% |
| Professional prestige | 12% | 14% | 14% | 8% |

Table 6

Individuals/Factors which Encouraged/Discouraged the Participants' Entrance into Teaching

| | N* | Very Encouraging | Somewhat Encouraging | Neither Encouraging or Discouraging | Somewhat Discouraging | Very Discouraging |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Individuals:** | | | | | | |
| Mother | 32 | 53% | 13% | 25% | 9% | -- |
| Other relatives | 32 | 28% | 25% | 38% | 9% | -- |
| College teachers | 30 | 37% | 27% | 27% | 10% | -- |
| Siblings | 29 | 17% | 24% | 59% | -- | -- |
| College peers | 29 | 28% | 17% | 38% | 17% | -- |
| Colleagues | 27 | 48% | 26% | 7% | 15% | 4% |
| Father | 25 | 28% | 24% | 40% | 8% | -- |
| Students | 24 | 46% | 29% | 13% | 4% | 8% |
| Elementary teachers | 24 | 42% | 25% | 33% | -- | -- |
| Secondary teachers | 23 | 17% | 26% | 52% | -- | 4% |
| High school peers | 18 | 6% | 11% | 78% | 6% | -- |
| Spouse | 14 | 50% | 29% | 21% | -- | -- |
| Children | 13 | 78% | -- | 22% | -- | -- |

*Excludes not-applicable/missing responses.

Table 6 (continued)

| | N | Very Encouraging | Somewhat Encouraging | Neither Encouraging or Discouraging | Somewhat Discouraging | Very Discouraging |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Factors:** | | | | | | |
| Need for "minority" teachers | 34 | 62% | 21% | 18% | -- | -- |
| Lack of role models for youth | 32 | 69% | 16% | 13% | 3% | -- |
| Poor conditions of "minority" communities | 32 | 56% | 25% | 19% | -- | -- |
| Interest in service occupation | 31 | 55% | 32% | 13% | -- | -- |
| Previous jobs held | 30 | 40% | 37% | 23% | -- | -- |
| The media | 29 | 7% | 38% | 45% | 7% | 4% |
| Other* | 12 | 92% | -- | 8% | -- | -- |

*Other (N=12):

Relating to Role Models (N=3)
"Low literacy rate Black youths"
"Positive role models is by far the most influential reason."
"I am very concerned about the educational and cultural influences affecting my own children. This has led to a very strong desire to positively influence the lives of other children, particularly African-American

Table 6 (continued)

Relating to Service (N=3)
"The need to share what I have with others and to widen the horizons of young children"
"The need and obligation to give back to the community"
"Interest in sharing knowledge, information, and ideas"

Career Related (N=3)
"Computer science major in college--realized it was a very unsociable career"
"Need for steady job to complement my writing career"
"to receive credentials necessary to start an Islamic school and the disarray of the public school system"

More Personal (N=3)
"My personal needs and desires"
"A friend convinced me of the other advantages, i.e., days, hours, summers off, etc."
"love for education and for children"

Table 7

Time Period When Participants Decided to Become Teachers*

| | All (n=41) | Prospective (n=14) | Beginning (n=27) | Beginning Teachers | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Preservice at TC (n=19) | Preservice Elsewhere w/ Inservice at TC (n=3) | Inservice at TC (n=5) |
| During elementary school | 24% | 14% | 30% | 11% | 67% | 80% |
| During high school | 10% | 7% | 11% | -- | 67% | 20% |
| During undergraduate school | 51% | 64% | 44% | 26% | 100% | 80% |
| After graduation from undergraduate school | 42% | 43% | 41% | 53% | -- | 20% |
| While in graduate school | 7% | -- | 11% | 16% | -- | -- |

*Columns total more than 100% because some respondents indicated more than one time period.